



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF**

**GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
**(GDCA)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING**  
**31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2019**

**Presented at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**  
**by Dr. Osman Al-Hassan, Chairman of GDCA**  
**18<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>2.0 GDCA CORE ACTIVITIES</b> .....	2
2.1 Annual General Meeting.....	2
2.2 Steering Committee Meetings.....	2
2.3 Technical Committee Meetings .....	2
2.4 Denmark Seminar .....	2
2.5 Partnership Meetings .....	2
<b>3.0 KEY PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR</b> ...	3
3.1 Summary of Programmes and Projects.....	3
3.2 Current geographical coverage .....	3
3.3 Empowerment for Life Programme .....	4
3.3.1 Key programme outcomes .....	4
3.3.2 Empowerment for Life programme, Tolon.....	5
3.4 School for Life (SfL) Key programme outcomes .....	5
3.4.1 Community Volunteer Teachers Project.....	5
3.4.2 Teacher Professional Development Project.....	5
3.5 Changing Lives in Innovative Partnerships (CLIP).....	6
3.5.1 Adaptation Fund Project Key outcomes .....	6
3.5.2 Fighting Child Hunger Project.....	6
3.5.3 Collaboration with University of Ghana.....	6
3.6 GDCA Secretariat: Key programme outcomes.....	6
3.6.1 PAMOBARMA .....	6
3.6.2 Ghana’s Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM) Project .....	7
3.6.3 Enhancing Participation in Revenue Mobilization Project .....	7
3.6.4 EU Aid Volunteer Project.....	7
3.7 Dalun Simli Centre (DSC) .....	7
3.7.1 Key activities during the period.....	7
3.8 Simli Radio (SR).....	8
3.8.1 Key activities during the period.....	8
3.9 Summary of human resource base .....	8
<b>4.0 MAIN CHALLENGES</b> .....	8
<b>5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD</b> .....	9
<b>6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	10

**ANNUAL REPORT OF GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES  
ASSOCIATION, PRESENTED ON SATURDAY 18<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020  
AT DALUN-KUMBUNGU DISTRICT**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The year 2019 was once again another eventful one, and as it is required of us as a truly accountable organisation, we are here to deliver to you the stakeholders, the account of what has transpired during the past year. It is also an opportunity to fulfil the very important legal requirement of us, as a non-governmental organisation, to hold a general meeting each year. This is to help us communicate our successes and challenges to you the members and other stakeholders. We are happy to see all the various stakeholders gathered here for this very important event.

The past year was relative peaceful as expected, which enabled us to accomplish what we set ourselves to do. Peace remains an important precondition for any meaningful development to take place and each and every one of us must be thankful to God for the peace we enjoyed in our communities during the year.

Various government policies supported our efforts to contribute to the development of our communities and the country as a whole, and continue to do so. The "Planting for Food and Jobs" programme is worth mentioning. Many farmers were able to grow more to feed their families and improve their household incomes. The "One Village, One Dam," and the National Health Insurance Scheme are but a few of the policies and programmes of government which provided the development context and enabling environment for our operations as well as for the promotion of the welfare of our beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

However, some unfavourable weather conditions affected some of our communities last year with a long period of drought at the beginning of the farming season. This resulted in delays in planting. On the other hand, there were excessive floods in the middle of the season in parts of the region, causing destruction to crops, livestock and household activities. The negative consequences of these were felt in the form of high food prices, which was worsened by the global hikes in fuel prices during the year.

**Vision**

"An empowered and happy society in harmony with the environment."

**Mission**

GDCA exists to empower the citizens of deprived communities and the socially excluded in Ghana to work to achieve political, social and economic development and engage in sound environmental practices for sustainable living.

GDCA continues to uphold its core values of social equality, non-partisanship, honesty, transparency and accountability, team work and grassroots involvement.

## **2.0 GDCA CORE ACTIVITIES**

GDCA carried out all its core activities as an organisation during the year, providing coordination and political support to its units and programmes as well as in relations with its partners and key collaborators.

### **2.1 Annual General Meeting**

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at Dalun. The representation at the AGM was based on the agreed procedures, which saw SfL, CLIP, Dalun Simli Centre, Simli Radio and the CBO-LOM Unit of GDCA Secretariat send delegates numbering up to fifty (50) to the AGM.

### **2.2 Steering Committee Meetings**

The Steering Committee held all its mandated quarterly ordinary meetings during the period and provided overall oversight responsibility for implementation programmes and projects during the year. The Steering Committee considered a number of issues regarding the various programmes and projects. All the meetings were very resourceful and beneficial to the growth of the organization.

### **2.3 Technical Committee Meetings**

The Technical Committees of the units have also held regular meetings to fulfil their mandates of oversight on the units. Whereas some Technical Committees were able to achieve the mandatory quarterly meetings, others could not. The TCs approved plans and budgets, programme and financial reports as well as staff appointments.

### **2.4 Denmark Seminar**

The 2019 Denmark Seminar was organised from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019 with the participation of a large Danish delegation who were in Ghana to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of GV. It was an opportunity to examine different development paradigms and dynamics and cultures both in the Ghanaian and Danish contexts with regards the theme **"Growing up in Northern Ghana; the role of communal spirit in Development"**. It was a great opportunity for participants to be reminded of, and to learn aspects of the different development aspirations of the partners.

### **2.5 Partnership Meetings**

GDCA held the 2019 bilateral meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 and the Programme Strategic Committee (PSC) meeting with its Danish counterparts, the Ghana Friends (GV). The PSC meeting was held between 2 and 3 May 2019 in Dalun. The main theme for the meeting was **"Ghana Beyond Aid, what are the implications for CSOs and how can we ensure sustainability?"** A 5-member team from the GDCA Steering Committee participated in the

meeting. The meeting also discussed and approved the Empowerment for Life (E4L) Programme narrative and financial reports and partner portfolios among others.

### 3.0 KEY PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR

#### 3.1 Summary of Programmes and Projects

Name of Programme/Project	Implementing Unit(s)	Partners/ Funding Agency
Empowerment for Life (E4L)	GDCA SEC, CLIP & SfL	GV/Danida
Empowerment for Life (E4L), Tolon	GDCA SEC, CLIP & SfL	Tzedek
Project to Support Livestock Mobility for Better Access to Resources and Markets in West Africa (PAMOBARMA)	GDCA SEC/CLIP	AFL/AFD, EU
Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM)	GDCA SEC	OXFAM/USAID
Enhancing Participation in Revenue Mobilization (EPREM)	GDCA SEC	STAR Ghana Foundation/EU, DfID, DANIDA
European Volunteers Aid (EVA) Project	GDCA SEC	European Union (EU)
Adaptation Fund Project	CLIP	UNDP
Community Volunteer Teacher Project	SfL	Teach2Teach/DfID
Education Quality Initiative Project	SfL	DfID
Teacher Professional Development Project	SfL	GV /Danida
Communities United in Fighting Child Hunger (CUFCH) Project	CLIP	GV/Denmark's Collection
Construction of 3No. Hand-dug wells	CLIP	UG Earth Science Department

#### 3.2 Current geographical coverage

Region	Districts
Northern	Savelugu Municipal, Gushegu, Karaga, Saboba, Mion, Kumbungu and Tolon
Savannah	East Gonja Municipal, Central Gonja and North East Gonja
Upper East	Bawku Municipal, Bawku West and Pusiga
Upper West	Nadoli, Nandom and Sisala East

## **3.3 Empowerment for Life Programme**

### **3.3.1 Key programme outcomes**

The Empowerment for Life (E4L) Programme has demonstrated commitment to facilitating underserved citizens and groups in its intervention area to increase their participation in local governance and access to democratic decision-making processes. The programme results show that the 240 E4L target CBOs are well managed and work collectively in promoting their rights and issues in their communities and districts. By December 2019, over 92% of the 240 targeted CBOs initiated community development activities in their various communities and districts.

Access to quality education services has increased as a result of improved school governance in the E4L programme districts. This stems from the increased capacity of the SMCs and PTAs to execute their mandates, roles and responsibilities. SMCs and PTAs in the five operational districts of the programme now monitor the schools regularly and engage school authorities on making schools friendly for girls to promote retention of girls in school. The SMCs and PTAs have facilitated the return of some girls who dropped out of school, back to school and have helped to prevent some forced/early marriage of girls (e.g. 3 girls from Mion district). As a result, communities in E4L operating districts have increased retention of girls by 8.5 percent in 2019 for girls in primary 6, i.e. from 87.7% in 2018 to 96.2% in 2019. We still to work hard for the socio-cultural factors affecting girls' retention in school to be eradicated completely.

Farmers obtained increased yields and better quality produce, thereby recording increases in business income. The programme trained 120 Community Livestock Worker (CLW) and 25 Agricultural Extension Volunteers. to support the Ministry of Agriculture in providing basic animal health care and extension services to farmers in their various communities. The program has identified six viable businesses of the CBOs for a business incubator program being modelled by the program. These businesses have developed their business plans and will in the coming year be facilitated to access financial support to expand and make their businesses more competitive and profitable. Farmer groups now have increased resilience against unexpected shocks by diversifying their income sources. by diversifying their income sources Majority of the farmers diversify into livestock rearing and trading among others. Most of them also rely on savings from their VSLA as a mitigation measure.

The programme facilitated citizens and communities' monitoring of 17 capital development projects such as school infrastructure, health facilities, market infrastructure, etc. being provided by MMDAs to the communities from 2018 to 2019. This process increased transparency and accountability of the MMDAs by providing information about community projects and responding to community concerns on the execution of the projects. The result has been better quality projects that meet the needs of the communities.

The partners and their subsidiaries have carried out and participated in national advocacy campaigns in 2019. GDCA organized the People's Assembly forum on the Auditor-General's report for 2018, which brought together participants from CSOs, media, CBOs, PWDs, MMDAs, RCC and Regional Audit. The forum enlightened participants about the report, and at the end, participants requested that the forum should be held annually, nationally and at the districts because of how revealing and educative the forum was. The Baobab Market, a civil society platform, which GDCA leads, carried out a campaign against illegal logging of rosewood with a series of media events. This generated national discussion on the matter leading the arrest and repatriation of a Chinese national who was engaged in the illegal activity.

### **3.3.2 Empowerment for Life programme, Tolon**

During the year, GDCA entered into a new partnership with Tzedek, a UK-based Jewish charity organization for the replication of the E4L programme in the Tolon District. This initiative has brought back smiles onto the faces of our constituents in the District, who have been appealing to GDCA to extend its activities again to the District. The project has been very much welcomed by the Tolon District Assembly, the traditional authorities, CBOs and other stakeholders.

## **3.4 School for Life (SfL) Key programme outcomes**

### **3.4.1 Community Volunteer Teachers Project**

- After a long period of preparations, the Community Volunteer Teachers project, under the partnership with Teach2Teach International, was finally launched. This has been a very important project that has come to address the issue of teacher shortage in our under-served communities. The results of the project have been impressive already, with some Head Teachers relying on some volunteer teachers to teach in upper Primary classes. This is an indication of how well the volunteers are doing not only regular academic work, but also extra-curricular activities such as sports and recreation... The results also indicate that the pupils are becoming more proficient in numeracy and literacy.
- The midline evaluation revealed that pupils from two Districts have become more proficient in Literacy and Numeracy by 19% and 9% respectively.
- Out of the 20 beneficiary schools, 16 of them have established reading clubs. All the beneficiary schools were observed to be using the BOOK AID materials more during instructional periods. This provided all students the opportunity to have access to the books.

### **3.4.2 Teacher Professional Development Project**

The Teacher Professional Development Project focusing on capacity building of teachers on relational competences has been successfully implemented in the Mion District. It is planned to expand the project to more schools as a result of its success.

### **3.5 Changing Lives in Innovative Partnerships (CLIP)**

During the year under review there was a change of entity name from *Community Life Improvement Programme* to now ***Changing Lives in Innovative Partnerships*** but still with the acronym "CLIP."

#### **3.5.1 Adaptation Fund Project Key outcomes**

- Under the UNDP sponsored Adaptation Fund Project, 12,000 fingerlings have also been stocked in 12 cages in 6 communities after installing fish nets to the cages. The communities are 3 in the Upper East Region, 1 in the Savannah Region and 2 in the Upper West Region
- A total of 7,560kg of fish feed was procured during the quarter. This represents 420kg of fish feed per fish cage. These procured fish feeds were distributed to the communities.
- Community members have been trained on how to feed and effectively manage the fingerlings.

#### **3.5.2 Fighting Child Hunger Project**

- The implementation of the FCH project has created a lot of awareness and brought about behavioural changes among women and community members on the issues of child nutrition and children's right to quality food. Women Groups now have alternative livelihood from the production and sale of Tom-Brown and other Soy products.
- The soya beans processing factory is now up and running. The factory is now able to produce weani-mix and Tom-Brown in commercial quantities.

#### **3.5.3 Collaboration with University of Ghana**

- Under a collaboration with the Earth Science Department of the University of Ghana, three hand-dug wells have been constructed in 3 communities and there is increased awareness of communities on the effective management of the hand-dug wells.

### **3.6 GDCA Secretariat: Key programme outcomes**

#### **3.6.1 PAMOBARMA**

Informed debates on livestock mobility have been conducted in the three operational regions of Savannah, Northern and Upper East involving livestock traders, herders, farmers, traditional authorities, MMDAs and other stakeholders. The debates increased participants' knowledge in livestock production and off-take, how the values chain operates as well as the critical challenges facing livestock trading in West Africa. Participants are applying the knowledge of the informed debate to promote peaceful coexistence between crop farmers and herders.

The construction of the cattle markets that was started in some District Assemblies has made the local authorities become very responsive to community concerns and make conscious efforts to address them any time such issues arise. Evidence shows that the construction of the markets has

lead better handling of livestock especially during loading onto trucks as well as increased revenue to the Assemblies.

### **3.6.2 Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM) Project**

The opportunities created under the GSAM project with social media has enabled citizens to monitor projects in their respective communities effectively. Citizens have been emboldened to question whatever goes on around them in terms of construction of capital development projects. The EGDA WhatsApp platform so created has given citizens the power to send messages and photos on capital projects in their communities to the authorities.

Monitoring and supervision of capital projects by technical staff of the Assemblies has been strengthened with more frequent visits compared to previous projects.

### **3.6.3 Enhancing Participation in Revenue Mobilization Project**

The STAR Ghana Foundation sponsored project has raised interest among citizens in the affairs of the East Gonja Municipal Assembly, especially on internal revenue generation, as a result of increased knowledge on the Assemblies' Internal Revenue generation processes. This has resulted in increased participation of citizens in revenue generation and utilization. Citizens are now able to assess the performance of the East Gonja Municipal Assembly on revenue generation and engaging with the Assembly on the results of their assessments. The Assembly accepted the results of the assessments used the results to improve revenue generation and responsiveness to citizens' demands for improved services from the Assembly.

The results also indicate that the project has brought up significant increases in internal revenue to the Assembly, with revenue exceeding targets by nearly 100% during the year under review.

### **3.6.4 EU Aid Volunteer Project**

After having gone through an assessment, GDCA has been given accreditation by the EU to become a hosting organization for EU Aid volunteers. Consequently, GDCA has been working with its European partners, ASPeM and ADICE to advertise for volunteers to support in various aspects of the work of GDCA.

## **3.7 Dalun Simli Centre (DSC)**

### **3.7.1 Key activities during the period**

The centre hosted a number of workshops and trainings during the period for a number of groups, individuals and organizations. The Centre hosted more than 1,000 guests during the period, making it one of the best years in recent times.

### 3.8 Simli Radio (SR)

#### 3.8.1 Key activities during the period

Simli Radio continues to be the leader in the region delivering community-based radio programming and services. It continues to attract and retain a wide range of listenership and sponsorship from various stakeholders. In this way, the station contributes to shaping public opinion on important matters of society, promoting peace, and advancing the development of individuals, groups, and communities, and the nation as a whole.

Among the key sponsors and partners are

- Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) with UNICEF sponsorship as well as Crossing Borders
- District Assemblies – Kumbungu, Tolon and Savelugu
- The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)
- GDCA/E4L and YEFL

The station also provided opportunities for social marketing by individuals and local groups to their local enterprises, religious activities, news casting, sports, entertainment and social wellbeing. The Pag-Sung (Ideal Woman) programme, presented by Hajia Kate Sulemana, a member of GDCA Steering Committee, has particularly, become very popular among listeners.

### 3.9 Summary of human resource base

During the period of review a few key staff changes took place. A new Manager for the E4L programme was appointed to relieve the Executive Director of the direct responsibility. The School for Life Programme Manager went on retirement after more than one-and-a-half decades of service. Consequently a new Manager has been appointed. The summary of the human resource base is as follows:

Unit	Permanent Staff			Volunteers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
CLIP	8	2	10	3	0	3
GDCA	7	1	8	0	0	0
E4L	28	5	33	9	13	22
School for Life	8	2	10	16	18	34
Simli Radio	3	0	3	10	2	12
Simli Centre	10	5	15	0	0	0
	64	15	79	38	33	71

### 4.0 MAIN CHALLENGES

The challenges faced during the period under review as an organization were varied. However, we will mention a few of them.

1. The frequent change in donor policies remains a challenge to GDCA. This has resulted in the frequent changes in the number of operational districts

of many units and has also resulted in reduced funding to the GDCA's activities.

2. Frequent changes and transfers of some key DA Staff is affecting the continuity of projects in the districts.
3. The fall armyworm invasion of some farmers, inadequate fertilizer coupons and bureaucracy in accessing the coupons by farmers as well as inadequate market for farm produce affected our fight against these developments.
4. The bad nature of the road network continues to take its toll on the vehicles of the programmes. This has increased the rate of wear-and-tear on the vehicles resulting in high maintenance costs.
5. The conflict between the Anufus and the Konkombas in the Chereponi and Saboba districts resulted in loss of lives and destruction of property. In the heat of the violence, work in the affected districts had to stall to ensure the safety and security of the staff.
6. The Chieftaincy dispute in Nanton area affected activity implementation. The incidence of conflict between crop farmers and herders in Karaga District affected the gains made by the projects in promoting peaceful coexistence between crop farmers and herder.
7. Delays in the award of contracts by MMDAs caused disruptions in the monitoring of capital development projects in the districts.
8. The collapse of dam walls in some of the communities affected the stocking of fingerlings and other activities under the Adaptation Fund project.
9. High cost of building maintenance is the main challenge encountered by the DSC within the year.
10. The Simli Radio Station currently experiences very unstable power supply, which is affecting the running and maintenance of equipment. The station therefore, is in dire need of a standby generator to complement the erratic power supply.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD**

From what we have indicated above, a lot was achieved in our effort to bring the desired development to our people. The lives of thousands of people in deprived communities have been made better as a result of the interventions of the programmes. Many women have benefited from our various E4L programmes, which has improved their businesses and their families. Potable water and sanitation facilities have been provided to communities and schools in the past, which did not only reduce the drudgery of looking for water, but also improved their health status.

Through the various capacity building and advocacy programmes, community people have gained increased awareness and knowledge about issues of governance, human rights and participation in decision-making. They have also taken steps to improve their situation in their communities and to demand their rights from duty bearers as a result of their increased awareness and knowledge of development issues.

Going forward, we know that we are going into a new situation with the advent of COVID-19. The pandemic has come to redefine the way we relate, and this will definitely affect the way we work. In this regard, we all have to take personal responsibility in our homes, at work and social relations to ensure that the pandemic does not take further tolls on the precious lives of ours and our loved ones.

## **6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We express our sincere gratitude to the chiefs and people of the GDCA operational area for giving us all the support we need in carrying out all these activities. Without their support, it would not have been possible to come this far.

To our partners GV, Acting for Life, ASPEm, ADICE, Teach2Teach International and Tzedek, just to name a few, we are very grateful. To our donors including DANIDA, USAID, UNDP, EU, UNICEF, STAR Ghana Foundation, DfID, and other partners who have provided the needed funding and support for the programmes and projects to be carried out. We say "Mbo Mfaa."

We wish to commend all our committees, CBOs and women groups both at the community level and the programme level for sacrificing and working so hard for the programmes to be able to deliver what they have been doing over the years. The various Local Committees, women groups, volunteers, chairmen and magazias have played significant roles in bringing about these achievements. The Technical Committees of the various programmes and their sub-committees have done very well in guiding their programmes in implementation. Members of the Steering Committee have provided the oversight for the programmes and the organisation as a whole. For all these, we are most grateful.

Various state institutions have provided us the support to make our work successful. The District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies (MMDAs) have been our dependable collaborators in all our programmes. The Northern Regional Coordinating Council has not relented in its support to us. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ghana Education Service, Community Water and Sanitation Agency, the National Commission on Civic Education and Ministry of Food and Agriculture are just but a few of the several agencies that provided us with crucial support for the realisation of

our objectives during the period under review. We would like to say a big thank you.

The Royal Danish Embassy in Accra and our most dependable friends in Denmark, the Ghana Friends, have been and continue to be our backbone, without whose support most of our efforts would have come to naught. We thank you very much for your tireless efforts.

Thank you and May God bless our home land Ghana.

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Dr. Osman Al-Hassan  
GDCA Chairman

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020